



Memorandum

TO: Historic Landmarks Commission **FROM:** Courtney Damkroger

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW **DATE:** March 25, 2004

DRAFT DOWNTOWN HISTORIC RESOURCE DESIGN GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND

On March 16, 2004 the City Council approved an ordinance modifying the Downtown Zoning Regulations and rezoned the area from CG General Commercial, R-M Multiple Residence, R-2 Two-Family Residence, LI Light Industrial Districts to DC Downtown Commercial District and DCNT1 Downtown Commercial-Neighborhood Transition 1 Districts to allow mixed use, commercial, and residential uses on approximately 389 gross acres. The ordinance is subject to a second reading at Council on March 30, 2004. The City Council also approved the Downtown Design Guidelines with additional requests that included returning to City Council with a Design Review process and incorporation of historical guidelines into all related documents.

The Downtown Zoning District Regulations included in the ordinance state that projects within a Historic District shall conform to applicable guidelines approved by the City Council, and that new structures exceeding 150 feet and an FAR of 6:1 which are constructed within one hundred (100) feet of a City Landmark or Contributing Structure in a designated landmark district shall be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission prior to consideration or approval of a development permit for new construction.

Planning staff composed the *Draft Downtown San Jose Historic District Guidelines* as one of many supporting documents to be incorporated into the Downtown Design Guidelines, as referenced in the Zoning Ordinance and directed by City Council.

ANALYSIS

The *Draft Downtown San Jose Historic Resource Design Guidelines* (hereafter HRDG) apply to the Downtown Core roughly bounded by Julian Street to the north, Fourth Street to the east, State Route 280 to the south, and State Route 87 to the west. The HRDG go hand in hand with the *Downtown San Jose Historic District Design Guidelines* approved by City Council in 2003 as well as the *St. James Square Historic District Design Guidelines* approved by City Council in 1989. The *Downtown San Jose Historic District Design Guidelines* apply to improvements and new construction in San Jose's Downtown Commercial Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The *St. James Square Historic District Design Guidelines* apply to improvements and new construction in the St. James Square Historic District, listed as both a National Register Historic District and a designated City Landmark Historic District.

The HRDG expand on those guidelines in order to address development projects effecting resources located outside of these areas, but within the Downtown Core area. Such projects may include the rehabilitation or alteration of historic resources, or infill projects located within the immediate vicinity of City Landmarks or Historic Districts. While the HRDG focus on commercial, industrial and institutional historic buildings within the Downtown Core, these guidelines can also be used in other areas of the City. The *Your Old House: Guide to Preserving San Jose Homes* offers guidance for projects dealing with residential historic buildings.

ORGANIZATION AND USE OF THE DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE HISTORIC RESOURCES GUIDELINES

The document is organized in three main sections – one chapter of context information, five chapters of design guidelines and an appendix of supplementary information.

1. The Historic Context section identifies development periods and styles of the historic resources. This section provides information on the historic context for the Downtown Core with a map (including identified historic resources), a basic history of development, and a description of the most common architectural styles found in the Downtown Core . The section is currently under revision by historic resource consultants.
2. The Design Guidelines section explains how to approach rehabilitation to help make informed decisions about alterations and design approaches. This section includes chapters that describe the identification of character defining features and provide guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic buildings, the construction of additions to historic buildings, and new construction adjacent to historic buildings.
3. The Appendices include related resource information for users of the guidelines.

The basis for these design principles is The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (The Standards). In most circumstances, rehabilitation will apply. As is the case with The Standards, the basic foundation of these guidelines is the retention of character-defining features. Character-defining features are defined as the tangible elements or features that give a building its visual character. Whether the building is significant for its architecture or for its history through, for example, an association with events or persons, the character-defining features are the various materials, features and spaces that lend the building its visual character.

Throughout the document, guidance on identifying and retaining character-defining features is always given first. These Guidelines outline a progression of treatments:

1. Proposed plans should work to **retain** the character defining features of the historic building. Where it is necessary to **repair** features, patching and then replacing individual pieces rather than entire features should take place.
2. Where documentation of missing features exists, reconstruction can be considered. Where documentation does not exist, projects can **replace** historic features with compatible, slightly differentiated designs in order to maintain the integrity of the original fabric.

3. Where new architectural elements and additions are necessary, they can be **incorporated** using materials and craftsmanship that take into consideration issues of compatibility, differentiation and reversibility.

The draft HRDG presented to the Historic Landmarks Commission is a work in progress. Comments on their substance should be directed to staff over the next two weeks for consideration and incorporation into the document. The final draft document, including descriptive graphics and photographs will be presented to the Commission at the May 5th meeting for final comment and recommendation, prior to review and recommendation by the Planning Commission in May, and consideration by the City Council in June. Planning staff are also sharing the draft document with the San Jose Downtown Association.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff requests that the Historic Landmarks Commission comment on the draft HRDG with particular attention to the following:

- Organization and use
- Design approach
- Coverage of key character defining features in the Downtown Core

Courtney Damkroger
Historic Preservation Officer

Attachments: Draft Downtown Historic Resources Design Guidelines